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ABSTRACT

This competency-based preservice home economics teacher education module on low income furnishings is the third in a set of three modules on housing in economically depressed areas. (This set is part of a larger set of sixty-seven modules on the Management Approach to Teaching Consumer and Homemaking Education [MATCHE]--see CE 019 901-967.) Following the module objective and overview, two units of instruction are presented: (1) furnishing alternatives (with lessons on buying new furnishings, purchase and restoration of used furnishings, and obtaining shared or donated items) and (2) furnishing items for low-income budgets (with a lesson on makeshift furnishings). Each unit includes the unit objective, overview, and a progress test. Lessons contain a narrative summary, and suggested activities and resources. A module pre/posttest (with answer key) concludes the document. (Workshop proceedings relating to the development of these modules are available in the ERIC system as CE 019 896-899; also available is a module on utilizing FHA-HERO as an instructional strategy to expand and strengthen the home economics instructional programs [CE 019 900].) (CT)

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ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED AREAS STRAND:

HOUSING

Module III-B-3 LOW INCOME FURNISHINGS

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1978

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CE 019 956

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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MATCHE

Management Approach to Teaching Consumer and Homemaking Education

MATCHE is an individualized, competency-based preservice curriculum designed for home economics education students at the preprofessional, upper division level. MATCHE is a comprehensive curriculum based on selected objectives which give emphases in three areas: 1) consumer approach to homemaking education, 2) teaching home economics in economically depressed areas, and 3) establishing occupational programs related to home economics. The material for each subject matter area of home economics has been organized into these three strands, and includes an FHA-HERO emphasis. These subject matter areas are home economics education core, housing, foods and nutrition, textiles and clothing, human development, and management.

The MATCHE modules were written by subject matter specialists from various colleges and universities offering home economics and therefore each is unique in the approach used for the development of the objectives. The modules allow for differences in level of achievement, rate of learning, and learning goals. They may be used independently, combined into a sequential series, or as a random set of conceptual units. Any instructor using the material can easily adapt the material to a specific group of students, the locale, method of instruction, and available facilities. Learning may be facilitated by offering one module in conjunction with others.

As MATCHE is continuously up-dated by those using the curriculum, some concepts and objectives may be added and others deleted. The purpose is to continually strengthen the program for pre and inservice home economics teachers.

Guidelines for Use and Continuous Development of MATCHE are on file with Home Economics units in each of the fifty state departments of education plus all of the Home Economics Departments in California institutions offering home economics education. This booklet and proceedings from the four MATCHE workshops give background information concerning the purpose and development of the MATCHE project.

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The project was developed under a contract with the Bureau of Homemaking Education, California State Department of Education under the provisions of PL 90-576 and PL 94-482. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Bureau of Homemaking Education or the U. S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

MATCHE PROJECT

1974-1978

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LOW-INCOME FURNISHINGS

Module Objective

The MATCHE student will be able to assist low-income individuals and families with the furnishings and enrichment of their shelter based on the family's budget, needs, goals, life style, and abilities. The desired goal will be an attempt to improve the tenants' satisfaction with their interior environment. Personalizing space and individual imprint will be stressed as a means of exploring unique abilities and interests of each member of the household.

Module Overview

Individuals and families with low incomes often do not have the financial resources to purchase all the furnishings and appliances they need, especially at current high costs. They need to be able to furnish their homes according to their priorities, needs, and goals within the limited funds available. This module deals with working and low-income people who need to furnish their homes within their means and abilities. The module is divided into the following units:

Unit 1: Furnishing Alternatives

Unit 2: Furnishing Items for Low-Income Budgets

UNIT 1

FURNISHING ALTERNATIVES

Objective

Given an economically depressed area, the MATCHE student will identify and evaluate, according to the furnishing needs of the residents, sources of household appliances and furnishings which are within access to the transportation available to residents in the given area. Alternatives will include: new, used, restored, shared, and donated items.

Overview

The purpose of this unit is to identify the alternatives available to the resident, such as new, used, restored, shared, and donated items, and to evaluate how these alternatives can meet the needs of a particular low-income family's furnishing problem. Alternative solutions will be explored. The low-income family's philosophy toward furniture and applicances will be investigated as to their preferences. Community resources for furniture restoration, construction, drapery and curtain making, etc., will be explored. Housing authority, home economists, community centers, activity directors, self-help workshops, and adult school classes in adjacent schools are just a few of the resources available to the tenant at no charge.

Lesson 1: Buying New Furnishing Items

The narrative summary, all of the resources, and the activities presented in this lesson will enable you to determine some of the factors to be considered when buying new furnishing items on a low-income budget.

Narrative Summary

New furniture is an expensive alternative for the family. Furnishing mark-up is at least 100 percent and is generally higher in the EDA stores.

Before buying any furniture, it is a good idea to make a careful study of what a family has in relation to what it needs. Some items of furniture already acquired may do for the time being or may very well be restored. Other items may be more urgently needed. Once a family has decided what it needs in relation to what it can spend, the family is prepared to make a decision regarding the purchase of furniture or an appliance. Purchase of one new item on expensive credit may preclude buying several used, donated, or shared items at much less cost.

Many factors should be considered when buying furnishing items, such as the manufacturer's and retailer's reputation, the model desired, the quality of construction, and any guarantees or maintenance plans offered.

Each item purchased on a low budget must be carefully obtained, for this item may have to do for a long time. Shopping carefully is a necessity. So-called "bargain buys" should be carefully investigated. Sometimes manufacturer error items (damaged, irregular, or imperfect merchandise) can be bought at a lower price. If the imperfection does not affect the quality or working order and will not be noticeable, these can be real bargains. The damage to the appearance may be easily disguised or repaired.

Discontinued styles or models and floor samples can also prove to be bargain buys. Good prices for furnishing items can also be found during legitimate sales such as seasonal or liquidation sales. Cutrate and discount stores will sell the bulk of their merchandise at a reduced price, usually significantly below the manufacturer's suggested list price. All of these sources can offer quality furnishing items at reasonable costs. Caution must be taken to evaluate reasonable cost by the EDA tenants' income, rather than middle-class standards. A comparison must be made with other dealers to assure the best buy. The finance cost of purchasing furnishings and easy credit must be explored. Are discount or cutrate stores really the least expensive or do they offer the best purchasing price? Why do low-income persons patronize these stores?

The purchase of new furniture on credit has been a major reason for some families to lose the modest shelter they possess. An understanding of the high cost of credit is essential.

> All activities should be submitted to and discussed with your instructor.

Suggested Activities

1. Choose an area designated an EDA section of your city or county. Check all the sources (within access to residents of that area) of new furnishing items. Recognize that many tenants have access to a car and may readily travel outside their neighborhood. Compare prices, sale offers, damaged merchandise or discontinued models, floor samples, and quality. List a series of conclusions regarding the price, merchandise quality, and services in relation to serving the low-income individual.

2. Interview low-income persons in these areas to obtain their feelings as to what furnishing problems they have. Select at least one family with a single head of household and three or more children. Select one elderly family. Make your own observations. Discuss your findings with your peer group and develop alternative solutions to meeting furnishing requirements. Are these solutions feasible to the particular families?

Note: It will be helpful to clear your interviews with housing authority directors, project managers, or local assistance agencies. Your appearance should be neat but not luxurious. Your manner should be helpful but not condescending or ethnocentric.

3. Interview the resident managers of two government assisted housing projects.
   a. Ascertain the common causes of poor maintenance, vandalism and abuse to the dwellings and interior furnishings.
   b. Determine what is considered by the resident managers to be the most essential furnishing needs for most of his or her tenants. (Recognize the manager is in all the homes. You have only visited five.)
   c. Explore the possibility of developing classes for furnishing construction, restoration, or repair.

Suggested Resources

Caplovitz, David. The Poor Pay More. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963.

Community Service Directory for your city.

U.S., Department of Housing on Urban Development. Focus on Furniture: An Important Element in Housing. September, 1971.

There is no Progress Check for this lesson. If you feel that you have adequately covered the material upon completion of the activities, proceed to Lesson 2.

Lesson 2: Purchase and Restoration of Used Furnishing Items

The narrative summary, all of the resources, and the activities presented in this lesson will enable you to determine some of the factors to consider when buying used furnishings on a low-income budget.

Narrative Summary

Sources of used furnishings are numerous. Thrift shops as well as church bazaars, auctions, or fairs often are good sources of used furniture. Flea markets are another source, as are the classified ads or garage sales. Such commercial sources as moving companies or "going out of business" sales may offer good buys. The EDA resident may be presented with options to obtain stolen merchandise. It will take discretion in warning against the hazards of receiving stolen property.

The purchaser must be able to compare the cost of the used item with new items. Some used items may be priced higher than a new item purchased in a store. The purchaser also needs to be aware of the value of bargaining and the ability to evaluate the worth of the item. Consideration must be given to the cost involved in any necessary or essential repair that may need to be done in order to make the used item serviceable.

Buying at a yard sale or auction takes skill. Frequently solid furniture is hidden under layers of paint or varnish. The price of the item may drop to just a few dollars just before the auction closes. The value of waiting until most of the bidders leave should be stressed.

> All activities should be submitted to and discussed with your instructor.

Suggested Activities

1. Check the various sources of secondhand furnishings in the low-income area used for Lesson 1.
   a. Compare the prices and quality offered.
   b. Explore the opportunities to get EDA resident to yard sales where the quality of the furnishings may be good, yet the prices very reasonable.

2. Evaluate each of these sources in terms of how they can meet the furnishing problems identified by EDA residents in Lesson 1 (Activity 2). Would these used items be economical, considering any refinishing and repairing that must be done? Does the consumer have the skills to refinish or repair the item? Does he care if it is refinished? Develop visuals to demonstrate the advantages of changing used furniture into something of value.

3. Explore all sources for assistance in the restoration, repair, and refinishing of used or discarded furniture. What is the adult school program in adjacent schools? Is there a community center with tools, sewing machines, paint, and varnishing equipment available? Check Self Help classes, extension home economist programs.
   a. Develop with your classmates a vehicle for involving some EDA residents in the programs.
   b. Assist in working with the residents in a course where you have knowledge or can obtain a resource with knowledge of some form of furnishing restoration or construction, i.e., curtain making, regluing chairs, refining furniture, re-upholstering, repair, etc.

Suggested Resources

Community Service directory for your city.

U.S., Department of Housing on Urban Development. Focus on Furniture: An Important Element in Housing. September, 1971.

There is no Progress Check.
Proceed to Lesson 3.

Lesson 3: Obtaining Shared or Donated Items

The narrative summary, all of the resources, and the activities presented in this lesson will enable you to determine factors to consider when obtaining shared, or donated furnishings.

Narrative Summary

One source of furnishings for low-income families is donations. These donated items can be obtained from the church or from charitable organizations. Abandoned furniture is another free source.

Sharing items may also be an alternative. The feasibility of this depends on the families involved. For example, several families might purchase a washing machine jointly and share its use. Families might also share items used only for certain purposes, such as cribs, roll-away beds, or highchairs. Sharing may help to strengthen neighborhood cohesiveness and thus provide greater security. When conflicts arise it may also create excessive stress.

All activities should be submitted to and discussed with your instructor.

Suggested Activities

1. Check the sources of donated furnishings in the low-income area of Lesson 1 (Activity 1). Compare rental prices. What types of donations are available? Evaluate and draw conclusions regarding possible alternatives. Make a list of sources for furniture donations throughout the city.

2. Using the same families interviewed in Lesson 1 (Activity 2), determine how many share furnishings. How well do these situations work out? Write a summary of the strengths and limitations of sharing. Recognize that in housing projects many share appliances and yard equipment, and some furniture may be provided by the housing project.

3. Write a brief summary taking into consideration the problems cited in Lesson 1 (Activity 2). Which of these--new, used, donated--alternatives are the most beneficial?

   Note the variables making different solutions desirable for diverse individual and family needs and resources.

Suggested Resource

Wilson, Patricia. Consumer Guide to Used and Surplus Home Appliances and Furnishings. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973.

After completing all activities, consult with the instructor regarding your findings and suggested alternate solutions to furnishing problems of selected EDA residents. If no additional work is prescribed, take the following unit Progress Test.

UNIT 1 PROGRESS TEST

Student_____

Low-Income Furnishings

Instructor_____

Date_____

1. List five sources of bargain buys that you have visited for furnishing items and evaluate each.

   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

   e.

2. What three factors should a family consider before deciding to purchase a furnishing or appliance item?

   a.

   b.

   c.

3. Give two reasons why secondhand stores may offer reasonable prices.

   a.

   b.

4. List three low cost or free sources of furnishing alternatives.

   a.

   b.

   c.

5. List three community resources which could assist the family with furnishing restoration, repair, or refinishing.

   a.

   b.

   c.

ANSWER KEY
UNIT 1 PROGRESS TEST

Low-Income Furnishings

Instructor:	In booklets reproduced for students, you may wish to omit this page.

1. damaged, imperfect, or irregular merchandise
   discontinued styles or models
   floor samples
   legitimate sales (seasonal or liquidation)
   cutrate and discount stores

2. what it has
   what it needs
   funds available

3. People hesitate to or are ashamed to buy at secondhand stores.
   Used furniture does not hold its value.
   There is an opportunity for bargaining.

4. (any three)
   shared items
   rentals
   donations
   auctions
   fire sales
   yard sales
   found or abandoned furniture

5. Housing Authority--Home Economist
   Community Center classes, shops, tools, and sewing machines
   Adult school classes
   Church classes

UNIT 2

FURNISHING ITEMS FOR LOW-INCOME BUDGETS

Objective

The MATCHE student will design at least three furnishing items for low-income or nonexistent budgets. At least one of the items will be constructed and tested for acceptance by a low-income individual for use, suitability of design, need, practicality, maintenance, desirability, and design qualities. A file of additional low-cost furniture designs will be maintained.

Overview

The purpose of this unit is to describe various methods by which furnishings can be designed for a family with a low-income or non-existent budget. Possibilities are limited only by the individual's creativity. This unit will challenge you to look around and to discover materials that may be utilized to create usable and functional furnishings.

Lesson: Makeshift Furnishings

The narrative summary, all of the resources, and the activities presented in this lesson will enable you to design various forms of makeshift furniture for low budgets.

Narrative Summary

One can find a wealth of free items to use in designing furniture if one knows where to find them. Garbage dumps and refuse piles can offer much furniture and items that have been disposed of. Free crates and old tires are only two of the hundreds of discards found around stores and factories that can be used for furnishings. Tires, car seats, hub caps, and wheels can be obtained from garages or auto wrecking companies. Tires or wheels make excellent swings or sandboxes for children, tables, etc. Cable spools and heavy duty packing crates can be obtained from electrical supply stores. These can be used for tables or seats. Demolition sites can be the source of old bricks, doors, windows, and pieces of wood. Large commercial food cans are often thrown away by restaurants. Lumber yards may be the sources of wood scraps and nail kegs. Upholstery, drapery, and carpet shops throw away numerous scraps at the end of a job.

These sources may supply items to be used for a variety of makeshift furnishings on a low budget. Old trunks with pillows on top can be used for seats or storage. Attractive and functional furnishings can be designed with little or no money.

All activities should be submitted to and discussed with your instructor.

Suggested Activities

1. Check several sources in the low-income area for items that could be used in designing inexpensive furnishings.

2. Using these items, design a piece of furniture for four of the families interviewed in Lesson 1 of Unit 1.
   a. Construct two of these furnishings and actually give them to the families. What is their reaction to them? Do they fit their needs?
   b. Have members of the family be involved in helping to construct a minimal-cost piece of furniture of their choice based on your idea file and some of their input.

3. Develop a file of extension booklets, government publications, books, and periodicals dealing with low-cost furnishings.

Suggested Resources

"Fit Together Furniture," Better Homes and Gardens, March, 1976, pp. 48-53.

Hennessey, James, and Victor Papanek. Nomadic Furniture. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974.

Hennessey, James, and Victor Papanek. Nomadic Furniture 2. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974.

Meadmore, Clement. How to Make Furniture Without Tools. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.

U.S., Department of Housing on Urban Development. Focus on Furniture: An Important Element in Housing. September, 1971.

Wilson, Patricia. Consumer Guide to Used and Surplus Home Appliances and Furnishings. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973.

Upon completion of the activities, check with the instructor. If no additional work is prescribed, take the following unit Progress Test.

UNIT 2 PROGRESS TEST

Student_____

Low-Income Furnishings

Instructor_____

Date_____

1. List five sources of free materials for designing makeshift furniture.

   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

   e.

2. Give two items that could be found at the sources listed above to make a bed and indicate how they might be used.

   a.

   b.

ANSWER KEY
UNIT 2 PROGRESS TEST

Low-Income Furnishings

Instructor:	In booklets reproduced for students, you may wish to omit this page.

1. garbage dumps and refuse piles
   restaurants
   garages and wrecking companies
   electrical supply stores
   demolition sites
   nature
   grocery stores
   lumber yards

2. The instructor will have to evaluate the plans and determine their feasibility.

MODULE POSTTEST

After you have completed the final unit progress test for this module, you should be ready to take the Module Posttest. See your instructor.

MODULE PRE/POSTTEST

Student_____

Low-Income Furnishings

Instructor_____

Date_____

Student:	This pre/posttest will assess your knowledge of the information presented in this module. You need study only those units that are prescribed on the basis of pretest results.

1. Explain some of the ways new furniture and appliances can be purchased at a reasonable or bargain price. What should be looked for in a new item?

2. List five sources of used furnishings and appliances.

   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

   e.

3. List at least five advantages of involving family members in the construction, restoration, or reconstruction of their furnishing whether it be new, used, or donated.

   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

   e.

4. Give an example of an item that could be found at the sources listed below and design a furnishing item with it.

   a. forest

   b. demolition site

   c. garage and wrecking company

   d. garbage dump or refuse pile

   e. grocery store

Return this test to your instructor for evaluation.

ANSWER KEY
MODULE PRE/POSTTEST

Low-Income Furnishings

Instructor:	Do not reproduce this page in students' booklets. You must retain it for grading and prescriptive purposes. Answers will vary with individuals. A preferred response might be similar to the answer presented.

1. Such things as manufacturer error items (damaged or imperfect merchandise), discontinued styles or models, floor samples, legitimate sales, and discount stores provide sources of obtaining furnishings at below their normal cost. When buying, it is necessary to consider the manufacturer's and retailer's reputation, the quality of construction, and any guarantees or maintenance programs offered.

2. (Any five of the following)

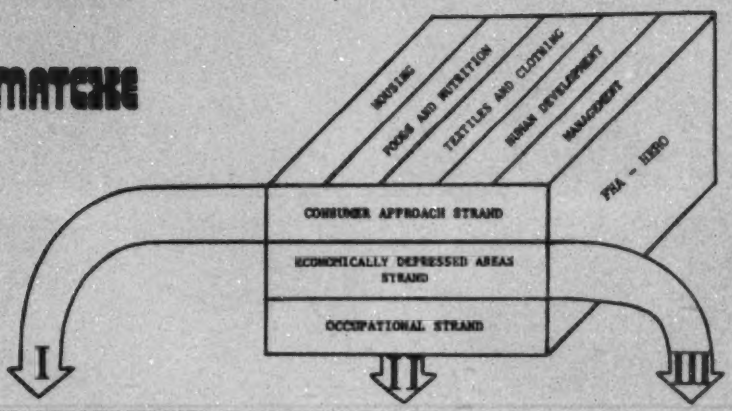
   thrift shops, bazaars of fairs, flea markets, classified ads, garage sales, moving companies, auctions, legitimate "going out of business" sales

3. (Any five of the following)

   Personalizing secondhand or donated items to meet their own taste
   Learning to maintain furniture
   Making use of idle time
   Developing a sense of self-esteem and creativity
   Developing skills that can be carried over minimizing expenses to other furnishing items
   Possibly involving the individuals in community centers or services that may help meet additional family needs, i.e., child care, recreation, nutrition classes
   Possibly leading to employment opportunities

4. The example should be feasible, should be realistic in terms of EDA families' needs, and should have possibilities of acceptance by those families. For example, it would be better to suggest that soda crates be utilized for seating or storage rather than mail sorters or what-not shelves.

MATRIX



	I	II	III
A.	CORE: CONSUMER APPROACH TO HOMEMAKING EDUCATION 1 Life Styles and the Consumer 2 Community Consumer Resources 3 Consumer Rights and Responsibilities 4 Incorporating the Consumer Approach in Homemaking Classes	CORE: ESTABLISHING OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS 1 Analyzing Job Market Opportunities 2 Developing Occupational Programs 3 Implementing Occupational Programs 4 Evaluating Occupational Programs	CORE: TEACHING HOME ECONOMICS IN ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED AREAS 1 Characteristics of Economically Depressed Areas 2 Life Style Characteristics of Economically Depressed Areas 3 Community Resources for Economically Depressed Areas 4 Developing and Implementing Programs for Economically Depressed Areas
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B.	HOUSING 1 Consumer Use of the Community 2 Procedures for Selecting a Community 3 Procedures for Selecting Housing 4 Shopping for a Home Loan 5 Procedures for Selecting Furnishings 6 Maintenance Procedures for Surfaces, Furniture, and Appliances	HOUSING 1 Occupational Opportunities Related to Housing and Interiors 2 Required Skills for Retail Sales of Furnishings and Related Household Items	HOUSING 1 Low Income Housing 2 Government Housing Programs 3 Low Income Furnishings
C.	FOODS AND NUTRITION 1 Technological, Sociological, Ecological, and Environmental Factors Related to Food 2 Regulatory Agencies Responsible for Wholesomeness and Quality of Foods 3 Consumer Aspects in Planning Meals 4 Cultural Food Patterns 5 Influences on Food Prices	FOODS AND NUTRITION 1 Occupational Opportunities Related Foods and Nutrition 2 Operations and Activities of a Food Service Operation 3 Managing a Food Service Operation	FOODS AND NUTRITION 1 Food Availability in Economically Depressed Areas 2 Low Income Food Patterns 3 Meal Management on a Low Income
D.	TEXTILES AND CLOTHING 1 Consumer Approach to Textiles and Clothing 2 Sociological, Psychological, and Economic Factors Affecting Clothing Selection 3 Clothing Needs of Individuals 4 Applications and Implications of New Technology in Textiles and Clothing	TEXTILES AND CLOTHING 1 Occupational Opportunities Related Textiles and Clothing 2 Assembly Line Garment Construction 3 Merchandising Textiles and Ready-To-Wear	TEXTILES AND CLOTHING 1 Clothing the Individual and Family 2 Utilizing Resources for Clothing and Textiles
E.	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 1 Societal Changes Affecting the Family 2 The Relationship Between Spending Patterns and Interpersonal Relationships 3 Financial Pressures in Various Life Styles and Cycles 4 Individuals and Families in Crisis 5 Consumer Aspects of Parenthood	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 1 Occupational Opportunities Related to Human Development 2 Children's Center Aide 3 Developing Programs for Preschool Children 4 Convalescent Home Aide	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 1 Characteristics of Economically Depressed Area Families 2 The Child and the Economically Depressed Area Family 3 Resources for the Economically Depressed Area Family
F.	MANAGEMENT 1 Relationship Between National and Consumer Economics 2 Consumer Legislative Issues 3 Environmental Issues and the Consumer 4 Financial Management 5 Family and Individual Credit Management 6 Management View of the Multiple Role 7 The Metric System	MANAGEMENT 1 Occupational Opportunities Related to Home Management and Supporting Services 2 Occupational Preparation for Jobs Utilizing Housekeeping Skills	MANAGEMENT 1 Management Skills 2 Money Management 3 Marketing Practices in Relation to Low Income Clientele